



SECTION III – BASIC DRIVING

Before you drive, both you and your vehicle should be in good condition to drive. You must have a valid learner's permit/driver's license and vehicle registration card in your possession. You should properly adjust your seat and mirrors and ensure that all passengers are wearing a seat belt.

A. Drive Defensively

A basic rule of driving is that, at all times, the driver of a vehicle on a highway shall control the vehicle as necessary to avoid a crash. Driving a motor vehicle requires that you take the responsibility to operate the vehicle in a safe manner. Doing so will reduce the risks for yourself, your passengers and other roadway users.

1. Visual Search/Driver Awareness

To better prepare for the constant decisions necessary for safe, defensive driving, you must know what is happening around your vehicle. Constantly observing your surroundings, to the front, side and rear of your vehicle, helps you to see problems that may cause you to change speed or roadway position.

By searching ahead and being ready to change speed or change lanes, you can operate a vehicle more safely and allow yourself time to identify risks.

2. Risk Management

Operating a motor vehicle is a risky activity. Consider the following steps to manage risk and be a safe and responsible driver:

- adjust your speed, position, and direction to respond to roadway conditions, enhance vehicle control, and increase response time;
- let other drivers know your intentions by using turn signals, etc.;

- maintain a safe distance between your vehicle and other roadway users;
- do not assume that other drivers will do what they are supposed to do;
- use caution at all times.

B. Right-of-Way

Right-of-way rules provide drivers with guidance for situations when other drivers or pedestrians are present. These rules determine which driver should yield the right-of-way and the sequence for entering and driving through an intersection or other driving scenarios.

Although the right-of-way rules provide a guide to determine who should yield the right-of-way, no one should assume they automatically have the right-of-way. The situation and circumstances at the intersection must always be considered.

You are responsible for controlling your vehicle as necessary to avoid a crash.

You should yield the right-of-way to:

- the driver who is at or arrives before you at the intersection;
- drivers in the opposing traffic lane, when you are making a left turn;
- the driver on your right, if both of you arrive at the intersection at the same time;
- drivers on a public highway, if you are entering the highway from a driveway or a private road;
- drivers already on a limited access or interstate highway, if you are on the entrance or acceleration ramp;
- the driver on your right at a four way intersection controlled by stop signs;
- pedestrians, bicyclists, and other drivers who are still in the intersection;